



NEWS RELEASE



National Forests in Alabama - Public Affairs

2946 Chestnut Street • Montgomery, Alabama 36107-3010 • 334-832-4470

Website: www.fs.fed.us/r8/alabama

Contact: James Flue or Tammy F. Truett
(334) 832-4470

For Immediate Release

Forest Service Controlled Burn Season Underway to Protect Alabama from Wildfires

(Montgomery, Al) January 29, 2010 ---- U.S. Forest Service fire specialists are conducting controlled burns on approximately 84,000 acres throughout Alabama's national forests during the next six months as weather and specific conditions permit. The controlled burns are used to improve natural plant and animal communities and reduce the accumulation of fuels, which may feed catastrophic wildfires. The fuels include dead and fallen trees, branches and brush. Also referred to as prescribed fire, controlled burns are carefully planned management tools used only by trained and experienced fire specialists. The public may notice smoke, uniformed Forest Service personnel and fire equipment in various parts of the Bankhead, Conecuh, Talladega, and Tuskegee National Forests while controlled burns are being conducted.

"Prescribed burning is a natural part of an ecosystem's health," said Miera C. Nagy, forest supervisor for Alabama's national forests. "Our annual prescribed burning season is part of a continued commitment to protect Alabama communities from wildfires while we care for the natural resources." Drivers should exercise caution if smoke is encountered along roads. A helpful tip is to use low beam lights. Maps that highlight prescribed burn areas can be viewed on our website at www.fs.fed.us/r8/alabama.

If you have questions about the following prescribed burns, contact a Forest Service district office:

- Bankhead Forest is planning to burn 15,000 acres in Winston and Lawrence counties call the office at (205) 489-5111.
- Talladega Forest- Talladega and Shoal Creek Districts are planning to burn 32,000 acres in Calhoun, Clay, Cleburne and Talladega counties call the Heflin office at (256) 463-2272 or the Talladega office at (256) 362-2909.
- Conecuh Forest is planning to burn 15,000 acres in Escambia and Covington counties call (334) 222-2555.
- Talladega Forest - Oakmulgee District plan to burn 19,000 acres in Bibb, Dallas, Perry, Tuscaloosa, Hale, and Chilton counties call (205) 926-9765.
- Tuskegee Forest is planning to burn 2,500 acres in Macon county call (334) 727-2652.